

***Iowa Outdoors***  
**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**www.iowadnr.com**

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**Aug. 3, 2004**

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**SECOND PHASE OF LAKE OF THREE FIRES RESTORATION TO BEGIN**

MT. AYR - The dredging phase of the Lake of Three Fires restoration was completed during the third week of July, increasing the average depth of the lake by 4 feet through the removal of nearly 500,000 cubic yards of sediments.

Increasing the lake depth is the first step in the lake improvement. The next round of lake improvements include placing additional rock on the shoreline and fishing jetties to prevent erosion, construction of rock reefs and mounds for fish habitat and construction of water shed sediment basins to improve water quality. Lastly, the fish population will be completely renovated and restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish.

In order to complete this second phase, the lake will be drained completely. The water removal will guarantee the elimination of the common carp and gizzard shad that have hampered the development of a game fish population and allow the bottom to dry faster for construction of the in lake improvements. The lake draw down is scheduled for the first week of August. The draw down will affect only the lake basin and all other park related facilities will remain open for public use.

If the public has questions, please contact Gary Sobotka at 641-464-3108, Doug Sleep at 712-523-2700 or the SW District Office at 712-769-2587.

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## **YOUNG OSPREYS READY FOR FLIGHT**

BOONE - The 25, six week old ospreys from Minnesota and Wisconsin placed at release or "hack" structures earlier this month and have been maturing to flight capabilities and will be released at five sites around Iowa. The young fliers are released in a passive manner to ensure they do not bolt from the site. Where ospreys learn to fly and fish is where surviving adults return to nest.

Five birds should be ready to fly at Saylorville Reservoir according to Joe Boyles, naturalist with Polk County Conservation Board. In addition Boyles reports an osprey pair are constructing a nest upon a platform placed for ospreys at Saylorville Reservoir. Although too late to attempt a nesting this year, this pair could become the first successful nesting ospreys in Central Iowa. Boyles is at (515) 323-5300.

Four ospreys will be released by osprey volunteers at Hartman Reserve Nature Center along the Cedar River at Cedar Falls. Amber Shinn, naturalist for the center, reports the birds are maturing nicely. Hartman Reserve staff and volunteers have released birds at this site since 1998. Shinn may be contacted at (319) 277-2809.

Four birds will be released at Don Williams Lake in Boone County by volunteers and staff with Boone County Conservation Board. Missy King, Boone County naturalist, reports many campers at the park are enjoying osprey activity inside hack structure on a closed circuit monitor set up at the park. King may be contacted at (515) 795-2809.

Clear Lake volunteers coordinated by Nelson Crabb have been feeding five Ospreys anticipating their release from Iowa Regular Baptist Camp along north shore of Clear Lake. This is the first year of releases at this site. A wild Osprey has been reported at this site also. Contact Crabb at (641) 357-3839 for further information.

Linn County Conservation Board staff and volunteers will attempt to release five birds at the Wickiup Hill Nature Center site. Dennis Goemaat reports their birds can be viewed on internet at [linncounty.org/osprey](http://linncounty.org/osprey). Contact Goematt at (319) 892-6485.

Each summer Iowans enjoy seeing ospreys and are encouraged to look for purple bands on their leg. The purple bands are unique to Iowa and indicate surviving birds that have returned to Iowa to nest.

In addition to nest building activities at Saylorville, there were four other nest attempts around the state. Unfortunately, severe weather negatively impacted each site. At Red Rock an Osprey pair were unsuccessful for a second year. At Spirit Lake a hatchling did not survive. At Macbride area of Coralville Reservoir a successful nest in 2003 was destroyed when the tree blew over. A second nesting pair were unsuccessful in their first nesting attempt. Jodeane Cancilla, Director of Macbride Raptor Project, has

provided technical expertise and valuable knowledge assisting volunteers at Osprey release sites. Jodeane and volunteers spearheaded Osprey releases in 1997.

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## **HOT WEATHER FISHING**

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Circling back over the sunken structure, our depth finder showed a small school of fish-shaped blips again. We had been marking a few fish, trolling back and forth over a half acre on Lake Macbride. This particular spot, though, about 11 feet deep, with a pallet 'cube' of habitat consistently showed fish hanging about five or six feet deep.

And, on cue, neighbor Larry's pole bent over and he lifted another nine-inch crappie over the side. I checked mine. Same jig-and-a-minnow; same depth. My pole was untouched, though, just a few feet away. I had been using bigger minnows, seined the night before. Eventually, after switching to his smaller, bait shop minnows, I did interest a couple crappies. The two I boated did push us over a dozen; not bad for the two-hour foray. And not bad for a midsummer fishing trip, when the bite often slows down.

But it doesn't have to. "Look around, see what other people are catching," suggests Don Bonneau, fisheries research supervisor for the Department of Natural Resources. "Check our 'DNR Hawkeye Hotspots' report. Ask at the local bait shop. Talk with other anglers. Not every lake provides good fishing all the time."

On one hand, fish are more active in hot weather. Their metabolism is high. They are eating more. On the other hand, there is plenty of natural food for them, with an explosion of insect hatches and young of the year fish. With fish surrounded by more natural foods, minnows, night crawlers, crawdads and other live bait usually work well.

Depth for fishing depends on what species you are chasing. "Bluegills spawn several times during the summer, so you'll want to stay shallow, looking for them," advises Bonneau. "Largemouth bass and channel catfish, can be located close to shore, too. Bass will be near cover; stumps, wood structure. They and bluegills will also use vegetation. It's overhead cover and shade for them. It also holds a variety of zooplankton and insects which, in turn, attract baitfish."

In deeper water, crappies will often suspend about halfway down. They and bluegills are 'schooling' fish. Catch one and you'll find more. That's what we were finding, on our two-hour crappie run. Each time the boat trolled out of the hot zone, the depth finder sightings would tail off and the bites would stop. As we floated back across, the poles would bend again.

Late summer anglers must also factor in the thermoclines present in lakes. With little water movement, many lakes stratify. Colder water on the bottom of the lake holds virtually no oxygen. Therefore, fish concentrate in the top layer. A good rule of thumb is that the thermocline will develop about halfway to the deepest depth; a lake that is 40 feet deep will stratify at about 20 feet, for instance.

In addition to changing your tactics, you might also consider a change of time. “Some of our best fishing is after dark,” reminds Bonneau. “A lot of people don’t realize that; and that lights are legal for fishing. Early in the morning; late in the evening, after dark are great times for crappies and white bass.”

Iowa’s four flood control reservoirs (Coralville, Red Rock, Rathbun and Saylorville) offer good populations of white bass as an attractive summer option. Other impoundments hold catchable numbers of them—stripers as they are called in east central Iowa—too. A good way to target them? Look to the sky. “Watch the gulls,” emphasizes Bonneau. “They are a sure giveaway that shad or other baitfish are getting riled up; likely chased by schools of white bass.” Telltale splashes on the water surface are good signs, too, as the shad leap from the water trying to escape

Morning, evening? Deep or shallow? Panfish or catfish? Bonneau offers a simple tip.

“Fish when you get the chance.”

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## **PRAIRIE RESCUE SCHEDULED AT LAKE AHQUABI STATE PARK**

Volunteers are needed to help reclaim a piece of prairie at Lake Ahquabi State Park beginning at 9 a.m. on Aug. 7. Workers will meet at the park between the boat ramp and the campground. Tools and refreshments will be provided.

For more information, contact the park office at 515-961-7101.

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## ***IOWA FISHING REPORT*** **For the week of August 3, 2004**

**The Iowa Fishing Report is issued every other week into the fall.** For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

**Northwest**

**Spirit Lake** (Dickinson): The walleye bite has slowed. Anglers are catching a few fish from the deeper water sections of the lake using live bait presentations. Yellow perch fishing is sporadic. Anglers can find fish anywhere from 8 to 18 feet of water. Most of the action has been at the south end of Angler's Bay, Crandall's Beach and south Marble Beach.

**West Okoboji** (Dickinson): Anglers are finding big bluegills along the weed beds in 15 to 25 feet of water. These fish will associate with weed clumps in shallow water early in the morning and in the evening. Smallmouth bass fishing is good using crawfish over the rock piles that are associated with weeds. Walleye action continues with good numbers of sub-legal length fish being caught along the weed lines. Persistence will be rewarded with fish over the 14-inch length limit.

**East Okoboji** (Dickinson): Good fishing continues for channel catfish. Traditional baits are producing nice stringers of fish. From shore, fish the north end. From a boat, fish any brushy habitat close to the narrows.

**Silver Lake** (Dickinson): Anglers are catching some walleyes casting crankbaits in the middle of the lake.

**Des Moines River** (Emmet): Anglers are catching channel catfish using night crawlers or cut bait around snags.

**Lake Pahoja** (Lyon): Channel catfish action is excellent using traditional baits in the evening hours.

**Five Island** (Palo Alto): Good numbers of nice sized channel catfish are available. Use traditional catfish baits. Anglers using night crawlers may end up with a number of different species.

**Willow Creek** (Osceola): Anglers are catching largemouth bass using top-water baits around vegetation.

**Storm Lake** (Buena Vista): Channel catfish are good on stink bait, crayfish and night crawlers.

**Yellow Smoke** (Crawford): Fishing is good for large bluegills around the trees and in front of the dam.

**Black Hawk Lake** (Sac): Channel catfish are fair. Anglers have been successful drifting skinned chubs and fishing with night crawlers in the inlet area.

**Brushy Creek** (Webster): Bluegills moved to deeper water and are now suspended around the trees. Anglers have caught a few in 6 to 8 feet of water at the north end. Use a wax worm or small piece of worm. A few walleyes have been caught using a slip bobber and a leech early in the morning or just after dark. Try for bass in the early morning hours with a plastic worm.

**Clear Lake** (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing is fair. Jig fishing with live bait over the rock reefs and near the north shore rushes is working the best. Remember the 14-inch

length limit. Channel catfish are biting on chicken liver and dead chubs. Bullheads are hitting on night crawlers fished near the bottom.

**Beeds Lake** (Franklin): Crappie fishing is good. The fish are suspended in the main basin. Drift or troll small jigs to locate fish. From shore, the best place to fish is at the end of the fishing jetties. The crappies are averaging 7 to 9 inches.

**Lake Cornelia** (Wright): Yellow perch fishing is fair to good for 8 to 10-inch fish. Fish the north end with night crawlers or minnows. Channel catfish are hitting on night crawlers, chicken liver and stink bait. Bullhead fishing is good using night crawlers for 7 to 10-inch fish.

**For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.**

### **Southwest**

**Viking** (Montgomery): Crappie and bluegill fishing is fair using jigs tipped with a night crawler or minnow in 6 to 8 feet of water. Channel catfish fishing is good using liver. Largemouth bass fishing has picked up in the evening around structure.

**Cold Springs** (Cass): Fishing is fair for crappies around the aerators. Channel catfish fishing is good.

**Manawa** (Pottawattamie): Fishing is excellent for channel catfish at Boy Scout Island. Walleyes are being caught off the west shore along the rocks.

**Orient** (Adair): Channel catfish are fair in evenings using liver.

**Greenfield** (Adair): Channel catfish are good toward the evening.

**Mormon Trail** (Adair): Walleye fishing is good using crankbaits or jigs. The 7 to 9-inch crappies can be caught using minnows in 6 to 8 feet of water. Fishing is good for largemouth bass and bluegills. Channel catfish are good using night crawlers or liver.

**Prairie Rose** (Shelby): Fishing is fair for 7-inch crappies in 6 to 8 feet of water using jigs and minnows around rocks and woody structure. Bass fishing is good. Anglers are catching channel catfish on liver.

**DeSoto Bend** (Harrison): Walleye and crappie fishing is fair. Walleyes being harvested are 15 to 16 inches. Anglers also are catching good numbers of largemouth bass. Carp are being caught near shore.

**Littlefield Lake** (Audubon): Fishing is fair for large bluegills drifting with night crawlers. Channel catfish fishing is good.

**Willow** (Harrison): Largemouth Bass fishing is fair in the evenings around structure. Bluegills are good along weed edges. Channel Catfish are being caught in the evenings using chicken liver.

**Southwest Iowa Farm Ponds**: Channel catfish, bluegill and largemouth bass fishing is good. Remember to ask permission and clean up after yourself.

**Big Creek** (Polk): Channel catfish fishing has been good using night crawlers and stink baits. Bluegill fishing has slowed, although fish 8 inches or larger are being caught. Crappies are being caught in deeper water. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair, with most below the legal length limit.

**Lake Ahquabi** (Warren): Channel catfish fishing is good with cut and stink baits. Bluegill and redear sunfish fishing has been fair to good using jigs or hook/bobber combination with worms and wax worms. Largemouth bass fishing is fair, although most fish are sub-legal.

**Hooper Lake** (Warren): Bluegill fishing has been fair using worms and jigs. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair using buzzbaits and surface lures.

**Hickory Grove** (Story): Bluegill fishing has been good using worms. Channel catfish fishing has been good on night crawlers. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair to good using top-water lures and buzzbaits. Crappie fishing has been good in deeper water, although fishing is spotty.

**Don Williams** (Boone): Channel catfish has been good to excellent using night crawlers and chicken liver. Crappie fishing has been fair using minnows and jigs with most fish caught in deeper water. Bluegill fishing has been slow. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair on surface plugs and crankbaits.

**Rock Creek Lake** (Jasper): Channel catfish fishing has been good along the shoreline and in shallow water. Crappie fishing is slow using mini-jigs with yellow skirts. The fish have moved to deeper water.

**Easter Lake** (Polk): Channel catfish fishing has been good with most caught on night crawlers and stink baits. Bluegills, in the 5 to 6-inch range, have been hitting well during the past week. Crappie fishing has been slow on jigs and minnows. Largemouth bass fishing has been slow, with the best catches along the face of the dam.

**Red Rock** (Marion): White bass fishing has been good in various areas of the reservoir. Channel catfish fishing has been fair in the bays and coves.

**Red Rock tailwater** (Marion): Channel catfish fishing has been good using traditional baits, and a few nice walleye have been caught. White bass fishing has been good in the tailwater using jigs and minnows. Crappies in the 10 to 14-inch range are starting to show up in good numbers.

**Roberts Creek** (Marion): Crappie fishing has been fair to good using jigs with minnows and/or night crawlers and channel catfish have been hitting on night crawlers.

**Saylorville Lake** (Polk): White bass fishing has been good to excellent trolling crankbaits or casting small spoons from shore. Anglers have been catching a few wipers up to 17 inches. Channel catfish fishing has been good with traditional baits at the spillway outlet from Big Creek Lake. Crappie fishing has been fair using jigs/minnows.

**Saylorville Lake tailwater/river** (Polk): White bass and channel catfish fishing has been good below Saylorville Reservoir. Flathead catfish fishing is fair with some nice fish caught.

**Three Mile** (Union): Channel catfish are being caught on liver. Crappies are in 8 to 14-feet of water.

**Twelve Mile** (Union): Fishing for channel catfish is good using night crawlers or liver. Some walleyes are being caught on leeches.

**Icaria** (Adams): Fishing is good for catfish using liver.

**Green Valley** (Union): Channel catfish can be caught in the bays using dip baits and liver.

**Little River** (Decatur): Catfish can be caught in the bays using liver or night crawlers. Some walleyes are being taken.

**West Lake Osceola** (Clarke): Channel catfish fishing is good using liver.

**Fogle Lake** (Ringgold): Some bluegills can be caught near the ramp or around the jetties. Channel catfish can be caught in the rocks or shallow bays. The lake is currently being lowered to improve fish growth but is still accessible for fishing.

**For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.**

### **Southeast**

**Mississippi River Pools 16 to 19:** Fishing for channel catfish has been good on stink bait. Bluegill and crappie fishing continues to be fair to good in deeper backwater areas and around the wing dams on jigs tipped with minnows and worms or bobber rigs. A few anglers are picking up a few walleye and sauger. Anglers have been catching a few flathead catfish on live crayfish and chubs. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair on night crawlers, spinners, and crankbaits. On **Pool 17**, the Big Timber area continues to be good for crappie and bluegill fishing. Anglers are also picking up a few largemouth bass.

**Lake Darling** (Washington): Catfishing has been fair to good at dusk. Concentrate along the campground island and along the southeast shoreline between the beach and the campground. Rainy weather forecasted for this week should increase creek flows into the lake. If this happens, concentrate your catfishing efforts on these streams, as the catfish will move into them to feed. Night crawlers and minnows will work the best for creek fishing.

**Lake Belva Deer** (Keokuk): Bluegill fishing has been fair to good. Bluegills are down deep. Concentrate on areas inside the trees in water 12 to 20 feet deep. Keep the boat shadow outline broken up by the overhead trees and the trolling motor off. The water is very clear and the fish can see anything on the surface. Very small jigs tipped with wax worms are still pulling in the most fish.

**Lake Geode** (Henry): Catfishing has been fair to good along the dam. Bluegills can be found along the drop-offs in the lake. Drifting ice fishing jigs tipped with wax worms along these ledges should work well.

**Lake Odessa** (Louisa): The lake is quickly being lowered to the summer draw down level in an attempt to get some vegetation to grow for the fall waterfowl migration. Crappie fishing has been fair to good in the tree falls in deeper water. It could be near impossible to get to Yankee Chute without using a small Jon boat.

**Lake Rathbun** (Appanoose): Channel catfish have been biting on stink bait and liver. Walleyes have been hitting on minnows drifted or trolled around rocky points and underwater reefs. Crappies have been hitting on minnows fished around structure in deeper water.

**Lake Sugema** (Van Buren): Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs fished in 3 to 5 feet of water. Largemouth bass have been hitting on artificial lures with mornings and evenings being the most productive.

**Lake Miami** (Monroe): Channel catfish have been biting on liver and stink baits. Largemouth bass have been hitting on artificial lures fished in the standing timber areas of the lake.

**Lake Wapello** (Davis): Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs fished around the lily pads along the outer edge of the weed line. Channel catfish have been biting on liver and stink bait. Largemouth bass have been hitting on a variety of artificial presentations.

**Diamond Lake** (Poweshiek): Fishing is good for channel catfish on night crawlers, and bluegills on small worms. Look for the bluegills around structure and weed lines.



**Kent Park** (Johnson): Bluegills continue to be caught on worms. The channel catfish bite is good on chicken liver and night crawlers. Anglers are catching 10 to 14-inch bass on various lures and live bait.

**Pleasant Creek** (Linn): Channel catfish are biting stink bait, chicken liver and night crawlers on the bottom. Largemouth bass fishing has been good using numerous live and artificial baits. Best catches tend to be around rocks, such as the jetties and the dam. Remember, there is an 18-inch minimum length limit on largemouth at Pleasant Creek.

**Rodgers Lake** (Benton): Bluegills and channel catfish are biting. Try worms for the bluegills and stink bait or night crawlers for the catfish.

**Iowa River** (Washington and Louisa): Catfishing has been fair to good. Minnows and stink bait seem to be producing the most fish.

**Cedar River** (Linn and Louisa): Catfishing is fair to good. Stink bait seems to be the best. Look for the catfish along the in the deeper brush piles during the day and on the prowl along the sandbars during the night.

**Wapsipinicon River** (Linn): Channel catfish are being caught on night crawlers and stink bait. Some walleyes are also being caught on a jig/minnow.

**For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.**

### **Northeast**

**Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15:** The Mississippi River at Guttenberg is 78 degrees and water levels have risen slightly. River stage at Guttenberg is 5.23. Crappie fishing has begun to pick up. Anglers are reporting better catches of crappie in **Pool 9** and in Wyalusing Slough (**Pool 10**). Bluegill fishing is excellent in **Pools 9 to 11**. Fish in snags with a little current using wax worms or a small piece of night crawler. A few nice yellow perch have been caught near Desoto Bay (**Pool 9**). Walleye and sauger fishing has slowed, but wing dams are still producing fish especially in the Lansing power plant area on **Pool 9**. Some sauger are being caught in tailwater areas using blade baits. Northern pick fishing is improving in **Pools 9** and **10**. Look for northerns at the mouths of creeks as the river temperature rises. Freshwater drum fishing continues to be excellent using a simple sliding sinker and worm in **Pools 9 to 11**. Drum can be found in nearly any area with moderate current such as the main channel borders, wing dams, side channels or tailwater areas below the dams. Try vertically jigging a blade bait for some fun fishing action. Largemouth bass fishing is excellent in **Pools 9 to 11** around snags with current and smallmouth bass are providing fast action off the rocks. Water level at Bellevue is 5.02 feet and is on a slow rise. The temperature is 77 degrees. Freshwater drum fishing is excellent on night crawlers fished along side sloughs and the main channel border around the wing dams in **Pools 12 to 15**. Channel catfish are good in **Pools 12 to 15** using cheese or stink (dip) baits fished in areas with current—move to find fish. Walleye fishing is good using night crawlers, leeches and crankbaits fished next to the wing dams. Largemouth bass are hitting top-water lures and spinner baits fished in the backwater sloughs and main channel borders around woody structure, vegetation and off the rocks in **Pools 12 to 15**. Bluegill fishing is good in a wide range of areas in **Pools 12 to 15** including brush piles, rocky shorelines or vegetation in the side

sloughs or along the main channel borders. Smallmouth bass are good in **Pools 12 and 13** on crankbaits fished along rocky shorelines.

**Cedar River** (Floyd and Mitchell): Fishing is slow, however, anglers are catching walleye and smallmouth bass.

**Turkey River** (Fayette and Clayton): The Turkey River has dropped and fishing has improved for all species.

**Cedar** (Bremer and Black Hawk), **Shell Rock** (Butler, Bremer and Black Hawk), **Wapsipinicon** (Buchanan) and **Maquoketa rivers** (Delaware): Channel catfish are hitting worms and chicken liver. Walleye fishing is fair to good on jigs tipped with a night crawler. Smallmouth bass are biting on jigs tipped with a piece of night crawler.

Channel catfish are actively feeding in many of the smaller feeder streams to the major rivers. Some good creeks to try in Black Hawk County include **West Fork Cedar River, Beaver Creek and Black Hawk Creek.**

**Meyer Lake** (Winneshek): Bluegill fishing is good on night crawlers. Largemouth bass are hitting top-water lures.

**Volga Lake** (Fayette): Fishing is good for bluegill using a night crawler suspended under a bobber.

**Lake Hendricks** (Howard): Bluegill and crappie fishing is good drifting worms or night crawlers in 6 feet of water across the center of the lake.

**Trout** fishing is excellent and streams are clear and fishable. During the busy vacation season, anglers are reminded to try the unannounced streams to *get away from it all*. At this time of year, Bloody Run, Glovers, Grannis, and Sny Magill are being stocked twice each week, with one of the stockings announced and one unannounced. North Bear, South Bear, Trout River and Wexford are also being stocked weekly on an unannounced basis. Twice during the month, Clear, Coon, Hickory, Little Mill, Little Turkey and the upper section of the Maquoketa River will receive unannounced stockings of trout. These streams offer anglers an excellent opportunity to fish for trout any day of the week. For current trout stocking information on other northeast Iowa trout streams, call the trout stocking hotline at 563-927-5736. You can also access the proposed trout stocking calendar through the internet at [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com) and go to the fish and fishing web pages.

**For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.**

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